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ABSTRACT

In the last fifteen years revisionists have attacked the ascendency of Ellwood P. Cubberly, and his pietistic picture of the public school, with historical perspectives that relegate public education to being one of many educational functions in American culture and with the view that public schools "miseducate" the American people. Neither provides the constructive conceptual framework that modernization -- the accelerated interaction of long term trends such as urbanization, the centralizing power of the nation-state, and racial and ethnic integration -- does. Such a framework might be the first corrective for the revisionism of the 50's and 60's. The second, a re-examination of the role of organized schooling in social change, should focus on the institutional history of education. The third requires a more sedulous view of the history of American education in comparative and international perspective as a phase of the modernization of Western civilization. The fourth corrective must be attention to the role of organized public education in building a political community in the United States, a traditional role for public education, but one long overlooked by educational historians. (JH)

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PUBLIC EDUCATION AND POLITICAL COMMUNITY

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For some fifteen years we have been busily engaged in revising the history of American education. It is now time to gain some perspective on the revisionist movements as we look ahead to see what shape the historiography of education should take in the next fifteen years.

The first time I really became conscious of a revisionist movement in the writing of history was in Urbana, Illinois where I was attending, if my memory serves correctly, my first convention of the American Historical Association. It was in December 1933 when I was a third-year graduate student at the University of Wisconsin. I was, of course, awed by the thought that I was actually rubbing elbows with some of the great historians of the day. I was especially enchanted by the rousing presidential address given by none other than the doyen of American historians, Charles A. Beard. His address, entitled "Written History as an Act of Faith" undoubtedly had an abiding effect on me. I was fascinated by the assurance of the man as well as by his eloquence and charisma:

> ... It [history] is thought about past actuality, instructed and delineated by history as record and knowledge - -

> record and knowledge authenticated by criticism and ordered with the help of scientific method. This is the final, positive, inescapable definition.[1]

But even Charlie Beard could not for long convince his colleagues that he had settled their problems for all time. In fact he was destined to provoke so much discussion and argument that his revisionism became the object of successive waves of revisionism that are still flowing and ebbing on the historiographical shores. In the 1920s and 1930s Beard and his fellow "New Historians" were busily revising the scientific historians who, in John Higham's terms, made up the first generation of professional historians brought up on German models of institutional history.

And no sooner had Beard, Turner, Robinson, Parrington, Becker, and other "progressive" historians of the second generation come to dominate the profession with their themes of conflict between the few and the many and their commitments to reform, egalitarianism, and collectivist democracy, but their successors, the third generation of professional historians in the 1950s, began to soft-pedal the conflict themes in favor of consensus themes and to reassert a kind of revival of scientific history in order to rescue history from the present-mindedness of Beard and the progressives. And then, of course, the New Left historians of the 1960s

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[1] Charles A. Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," American Historical Review, vol. 39, no. 2, January 1934, p. 219.

began to revive the conflict motifs of the progressives and to reassert a social reformism that the more conservative consensus historians of the 1950s and early 1960s had largely eschewed.

What all this means is that for virtually the entire life of professional history in this country, just about 100 years, we have witnessed wave upon wave of revisionism, and the fashions and moods have changed ever more rapidly since 1950. All this is to confirm, it seems to me, that Beard did have an inescapable element in his definition of written history, albeit not final or absolute, that is, that history is contemporary thought about the past:

> ...every written history...is a selection and arrangement of facts, of recorded fragments of past actuality. And the selection and arrangement of facts...is an act of choice, conviction, and interpretation respecting values, is an act of thought.[2]
>
> The historian who writes history, therefore, consciously or unconsciously performs an act of faith.... He is thus in the position of the statesman dealing with public affairs; in writing he acts and in acting he makes choices, large or small, timid or bold, with respect to some conception of the nature of things.[3]

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[2] Beard, ibid., p. 220.

[3] Ibid., p. 226.

The upshot of his argument?

> It is that any selection and arrangement of facts pertaining to any large area of history, either local or world, race or class, is controlled inexorably by the frame of reference in the mind of the selector and arranger. This frame of reference includes things deemed necessary, things deemed possible, and things deemed desirable. It may be large, informed by deep knowledge, and illuminated by wide experience; or it may be small, uninformed, and unilluminated. It may be a grand conception of history or a mere aggregation of confusions.[4]

Now, this was heady stuff for a graduate student, whose history courses, even in that citadel of progressivism at Madison, were mostly couched in the fairly dull, pedantic past-mindedness of German scientism. I gravitated then, and I still do, to the idea that history should have relevance to present-day problems, that the frame of reference of the historian is an important factor in writing history, that conflict is more the stuff of American history than consensus, and that the American experience of the past 300 years shows major directions of movement rather than simply chaos or cycles.

In any case, I have found it instructive to read again John Higham's volume in 1962 on The Reconstruction of American History as his authors

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[4] Ibid., p. 227.

looked back upon the revisionism of the 1950s[5] and to compare it with the volume edited in 1973 by William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr. whose authors assess the revisionism of the 1960s.[6] In doing so I was reminded more than once of the succinct definition once made by James R. Hooker, "Revisionism is the conscious effort to rewrite a resented past." And when this resentment takes the form of enhancing one's own personal or professional reputation by downgrading one's predecessors, I recall a comment by Louis B. Wright in the AHA Newsletter:

> The revisionist may write a book that is proudly acclaimed as a great advance over earlier prejudiced works. Yet too often the revision is merely new prejudice writ large.[7]

All this is by way of putting revisionism into some perspective as seen by one who belongs to both the second and third generations of professional historians and to urge a bit of humility about the "final, positive, inescapable" contributions that each of us is likely to be able to make to the history of education. Of course, we can improve upon our predecessors, but without them, we would have a harder time improving ourselves. And there are always our successors, who will find it still easier to improve upon us.

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[5] John Higham (ed.), The Reconstruction of American History, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1962.

[6] William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr. (eds.), The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture, National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, D.C., 1973.

[7] American Historical Association Newsletter, American Historical Association, Washington, D.C., June 1965, p. 28.

Let me say a word about recent revisionism in the history of American education as a prelude to my own suggestions for needed correctives in the future - - obviously another case of revision of the revisionists. In the past fifteen years the two major approaches that have received the widest notice have gone off in quite different directions from the common source of their reproach, that once most widely read of all American historians of education and now the most universally rejected, Ellwood P. Cubberley. Cubberley's great fault was, of course, that he painted an unrelieved "pietistic" picture of the "public school triumphant."

The first revisionist mood says in effect that Cubberley was wrong because, fundamentally, schools played only a minor role in the much broader stream of educative functions of American culture. The second mood says that Cubberley was wrong because, even though the public schools played a major role, their impact was to miseducate the American people. Between them the revisionists have left a vacuum that urgently needs to be filled.

The first mood, as we all know, was set by Bernard Bailyn's critique published in 1960. He argued that when we think of education "as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations," we see "schools and universities fade into relative insignificance next to other social agencies."[8] And he cited the family, community,

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[8] Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society, Vintage Books, New York, 1960, p. 14.

and church as the truly influential educative agencies of colonial America. Building upon this generally intellectual and cultural approach to history Lawrence A. Cremin has carried forward with some modification its major assumptions into his historiographical writings and into his comprehensive three-volume history of American education:

> I have defined education in my recent work as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities.... The definition projects us beyond the schools and colleges to the multiplicity of individuals and institutions that educate - - parents, peers, siblings, and friends, as well as families, churches, synagogues, libraries, museums, summer camps, benevolent societies, agricultural fairs, settlement houses, radio stations, and television networks.[9]

The recurrent theme in Cremin's three volumes is a stress upon education as paideia, the deliberate pursuit of a cultural ideal, and the total configurations or constellations of educational pursuits of which the "school was only part." Inevitably, the school comes to play a minor role in the story in comparison with the weight of affectionate attention that is given to the pluralism and the wide variety of "the entire range of institutions that educate."[10]

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[9] Lawrence A. Cremin, "Notes Toward a Theory of Education," Notes on Education, Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, no. 1, June 1973, p. 4.

[10] Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: Some Notes Toward a New History, Phi Delta Kappa International, Bloomington, Ind., 1972, p. 15.

This "culturist" mood is carried forward by Robert McClintock who not only argues that "schools are only one among many agencies of education," but also that we should suspend or revise the compulsory education laws requiring that "the young be inducted into the schooled society."[11] Instead we should seek alternatives to compulsory schooling, "a better set of provisions by which the community can promote literacy, intellectual skills, and a common culture."[12] In all this, education is to serve personal purposes, not those of commerce or the state.[13]

And Douglas Sloan would go much beyond the usual institutional history of higher education that focuses upon colleges and universities to search among the various "habitats of knowledge" for all the ways that people pursue the higher learning:

> ...centered in many places besides colleges and universities, including such diverse places as circles of writers and free-lancing intellectuals, lay scholarly societies, professional organization, lyceums, coffee houses, libraries, publishing firms, and a variety of religious, political and reform groups.[14]

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[11] Robert McClintock, "Universal Voluntary Study," The Center Magazine, vol. 6, no. 1, January/February 1973, p. 24.

[12] Ibid., p. 27.

[13] Robert McClintock, "Some Thoughts on 'Permanent Education'," Notes on Education, Institute of Philosopny and Politics of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, no. 3, December 1973, n.p.

[14] Douglas Sloan, "New Perspectives on the Higher Learning in America," Notes on Education, no. 1, June 1973, p. 6.

Now, let me try to be clear about my point in this. It is not that the effort to broaden the history of education to include much more than schooling is a wrong thing to do. It is a good thing to do and is a valuable corrective for Cubberley's school-oriented history. My point is that if this approach is carried to its extreme and is not balanced with continued attention to schooling, it will skew our views just as badly as Cubberley did. I believe it tends to lead the profession and the public to underestimate the importance of public education. And I could see this as even more damaging than overemphasizing its importance.

To give too little attention to schooling or to public institutions of education in American history can be just as anachronistic as Cubberley was. Entranced as we are by the educational importance of television and the other mass media in the later twentieth century, we should not be misled to underplay the role that public schools and colleges and universities played in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I am impressed by Patricia Graham's insistence that we should not forget the primacy of the public schools in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for they were clearly the most important agencies of education at the time. It is no wonder that Cubberley and Monroe, and other earlier historians concentrated on the schools. This is not to say that Cubberley painted the "final, positive, inescapable" picture.

The second mode of revisionism has set out not only to revise Cubberley but also to revise Cremin and the culturist view which the radical revisionists prefer to condemn as "liberal." This second mood turns Cubberley upside down by arguing that "the public school triumphant" was pretty much a disaster for its major role in miseducating the American people. In contrast to both Cubberley and the culturists, the public schools have been powerful agencies for enforcing the wrong values and attitudes of the dominant economic classes upon the reluctant or defenseless lower classes. The public school movement was not the enlightened, humanitarian crusade that Cubberley and Cremin have pictured; it was at root a means of social control whereby the native middle classes exerted their dominion over immigrant ethnic groups and, of course, the black and other racial minorities. All in all there should be no wonder that the public schools are doing such a poor job today; they have always stressed those middle class values of order, stability, obedience, and patriotism that would induce the lower classes to serve the interests of the upper classes under the guise of the rhetoric of Americanization or efficiency or unity.

Of course, the radical revisionists are not all of one piece and I do not intend so to lump them together; and, since they have attracted much more controversial comment, both from without their ranks and among themselves, I cannot hope to sort out the agreements and the differences among them. I would simply like to make one or two points. My main

point is that both the culturists and the radicals have in their different ways contributed to a depreciation, even an undermining, of the idea of public education in the past as well as in the present. Coming at a time when public education has been subjected to a decade of shrill and angry denunciation by the romantic critics and by the deschoolers as well as by the more measured refrains of the social science investigators of economic inequality, the faith in schooling and particularly in public schooling is faltering badly -- especially in the view of publicists and segments of the profession, if not indeed among that part of the public that knows the public schools best.[15]

Now I am not about to argue that we should overlook contemporary defects and failures and try to restore a confidence in present-day public schools simply by rewriting the history of public education in the past. But I do think we need to look at the problem as historians who, as Beard said, are in "the position of the statesman dealing with public affairs." Cubberley wrote in the progressive era of the early twentieth century when conflict was seen as a means to steady reform; Cremin wrote his earlier pieces in an era of consensus revisionism in the late 1950s and early 1960s; Michael Katz, Clarence Karier, and their radical colleagues are responding to the urban crises of the late 1960s and the campus unrest surrounding the Vietnam War, civil rights battles, and disenchantment with all forms of

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[15] See R. Freeman Butts, "Public Education and the Public Faith," Educational Quest, Memphis State University, Memphis, Tenn., vol. 18, no. 1, Spring 1974.

academic and economic establishment with which they identify the public schools. Curiously, the "evangelism" of Cubberley which Bailyn and Cremin criticize has had a revival in the moral outrage of the radicals, only now the schoolmen and reformers who were Cubberley's good guys have become Katz's bad guys, while Cremin is charged by Karier, Paul Violas, Joel Spring, and Colin Greer with being no better than Cubberley.

We should take note of the fact that the natural history of revisionism is taking its course. Just as the radical revisionists have taken the cultural revisionists to task for not really revising Cubberley, so the radical revisionists have begun to receive assorted licks from their critics. From this rostrum last year Maxine Greene charged Katz, Greer, Karier, Violas, and Spring with selective reading of the past, historicism, negativism, and oversimplifying the workings of social control. At the American Educational Studies Association in Denver last October Ronald Goodenow, J. Christopher Eisele, J. Stephen Hazlitt, and others raised a whole series of questions ranging from selective use of evidence to authenticity of documentation and misinterpretation. And for two years running at the Southern History of Education Society meetings in Atlanta Wayne J. Urban undertook very extensive critiques of Katz and the authors of Roots of Crisis.

In a long and detailed criticism of Katz's two books in 1972 Urban cites examples of overgeneralization, simplistic definition of ideology, neglect of sociologists' studies of ideology, confusing of categories under

the heading of "reformers," not distinguishing among administrators, laymen, and teachers, partiality in attributing true motives to the statements of working class people but charging rhetorical duplicity to the statements of reformers, ambivalence in the conception and inevitability of bureaucracy, and a simplistic view of classes that ignores ethnicity as a modifier of class.[16] A year later Urban subjected the Roots of Crisis to a similar critical analysis.[17]

Now, I cannot sort out and untangle the revisionist networks from Cubberley and Cremin to Katz and Karier, and I do not mean to demean their work. I find it valuable and stimulating for some historians to be putting education into the broader context of cultural and intellectual history and for others to be probing the darker recesses of organized schooling in relation to our institutional past and present. But I am not satisfied that either of these approaches will achieve the kind of history of education we need for the coming decades. The cultural revisionist approach has broadened our view of education, but it underplays the role of schooling and it has developed no very explicit conceptual framework to explain the dynamics of social change or the direction of educational change. On the

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16 Wayne J. Urban, "A Critique of Michael Katz," paper presented to the Southern History of Education Society, Atlanta, Ga., October 21, 1972.

17 Wayne J. Urban, "Revisionists and Liberals: A Critique of Roots of Crisis," paper presented to the Southern History of Education Society, Atlanta, Ga., November 16, 1973.

other hand, the radical revisionist approach does emphasize schooling and does hint at a conceptual framework of social change, but I believe it is too narrowly class-oriented to give a fair and persuasive view of the good and the ill that public schooling has wrought.

So I believe we need a history of American education that is neither conservatively defensive and laudatory of the past achievements of public education, nor radically devaluative and pervasively suspicious of the motives of the builders of public education. It should not be viewed simplistically as a crusade by idealistic reformers whose motives were pure, nor as the product of calculating schemers whose real purposes underlying their rhetoric were to protect their vested interests and exert social control over those who were alien to them. It should not be written as apology and celebration, nor as indictment and conviction of the perpetrators.

How then should the future revisionism of the 1970s be viewed? I believe it should consist of four kinds of correctives for the revisionism of the 1950s and 1960s.

First, we need more explicitly formulated conceptual frameworks for our research and writing in the history of American education, frameworks that spell out our theories of the direction of social and educational change. I believe such frameworks should be defined more explicitly than the culturists have done and should be more inclusive and "generous" than that of the radicals.

I agree with Karier's introduction in the Roots of Crisis that one's view of the present is closely linked with the past but I disagree with his narrow, limited, and foreshortened frame. In the past decade I have been looking again at the broad sweep of education as it functioned in some of the major civilizations of mankind, and especially in Western civilization. I cannot agree with the radicals' unrelieved pessimism about the role of education in the United States during the past 100 to 150 years. I believe that a conceptual framework focusing upon the process of modernization in America as a phase of Western civilization since the eighteenth century is the most useful conceptual tool for interpreting American education.

I have elaborated the conception of modernization in my recent book, The Education of the West, but I am not yet satisfied with the application of the framework to America and I expect to devote much of my time to it in the coming years. I cannot begin to outline here the schema I have developed so far, but I am convinced that we will achieve a more satisfactory interpretation of the history of American education if we see it as an essential phase of the major directions of social change summed up in the term modernization.

By modernization I mean the accelerating interaction of several long-term trends that increasingly distinguish modern from traditional societies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the present. Those that are especially important for the direction that education has taken are: the

mobilizing and centralizing power of the nation-state (a matter of large-scale political organization); rural transformation and industrial urbanization (a matter of the use of inanimate power and increasing social and economic differentiation); the secularization and technicalization of knowledge (a matter of special expertise); imperialism and colonialism (a matter of the missionizing fervor); increasing popular participation in public affairs (a matter of equality); the search for religious and cultural pluralism (a matter of freedom); the drive for racial and ethnic integration (a matter of justice); the widespread faith in popular education (a matter of individual and social efficacy or achievement).[18] The interaction of these often divergent trends, especially the twin drives to pluralism and to integration, have resulted in chronic tensions and cleavages over the control and practice of education. To single out one of these factors, such as industrial urbanization, to explain what happened to education at any particular time and place is to miss the complicated and subtle interplay of these several ingredients which can only be separated for purposes of discussion.

As I was coming to this frame of reference during the 1960s, largely through my concern with the broader history of Western education and its impact upon the societies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, I found to my gratification that a few American historians were beginning to arrive at

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[18] R. Freeman Butts, The Education of the West; a Formative Chapter in the History of Civilization, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1973, chaps. 9, 12, 13.

similar conclusions for American history in general. A dissatisfaction with both the earlier progressive and the more recent consensus and radical frames has led to the search for a new overarching frame. In his paper on American historiography in the 1960s written in honor of Merle Curti on his retirement at Madison in 1968, John Higham beautifully characterized the mood of this search:

> ... we have today no unifying theme which assigns a direction to American history and commands any wide acceptance among those who write it. Nothing in the current situation of the historian more seriously compromises his civic function and influence.
>
> ... Men need a unifying vision of who they are and where they are going. That kind of vision establishes both a goal for the future and a synthesizing perspective upon the past. Without it, a fully human life is impossible.
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> ... That some general scheme of historical meaning will emerge from the present confusion can scarcely be doubted, however. We may also be confident that an effective scheme will transcend the limits of a scientific hypothesis. It will partake as well of myth and ideology.[19]

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[19] John Higham, Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind., 1970, pp. 173-174.

As if in answer to this search I find several historians turning to the theme of modernization. I take three examples that span the earlier as well as the later periods of American history. Richard D. Brown found the theme appropriate to his studies of personality in the colonial period and early nineteenth century:

> As a general synthesis it has the advantage of permitting the cross-cultural, cross-chronological comparisons which are crucial for testing virtually any general hypothesis.... the concept of modernization, with its emphasis on historical processes...is one framework that makes the issue of American uniqueness a testable hypothesis rather than an article of faith.[20]

In his recent studies of working classes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century Herbert C. Gutman finds different responses and tensions arising as successive waves of people reared in premodern societies of rural, agrarian, and village cultures migrate to America in its preindustrial stage (1815-1843), in its rapidly industrializing stage (1843-1893), and in its mature industrial stage (1893-1919).[21] Viewing the role of public education

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[20] Richard D. Brown, "Modernization and the Modern Personality in Early America, 1600-1865: A Sketch of a Synthesis," The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vol. 2, no. 3, Winter 1972, p. 228.

[21] Herbert C. Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," American Historical Review, vol. 78, no. 3, June 1973, pp. 531-588.

as a phase of the different stages of American modernization would broaden the purely class-oriented history of education and picture the educational reformers rather more as members of a new professional middle class who saw themselves as modernizers of premodern immigrants than simply as nativist oppressors imposing their superior culture upon unwilling and inferior alien immigrants.

And, finally, Robert H. Wiebe makes the theme of modernization the key to the progressive era in the early twentieth century:

> The fundamental issue at stake in the history of the progressive era is modernization, and around this issue a profound change in scholarship is occurring....
>
> Behind these investigations is a compelling sense that something big was abroad in the land around 1900, that some fundamental shift was underway during the progressive years, and it is this feeling which has elevated modernization -- the term that best captures its essence -- to the place of primacy.
>
> As elusive as it is important, modern is a conceptual expression of our present, an attempt to abstract from our society those critical characteristics that distinguish not merely today from yesterday or the United States from Ghana

but one way of life, one quality of culture, from some other. Modernization is the process creating this present.[22]

If we can do for the history of American education what is being called for by Brown, Gutman, and Wiebe, we may be able to enhance the "civic function and influence" which Higham feels is so seriously compromised among historians generally.

My second corrective for recent revisionism has to do with the need for a thoroughgoing reexamination of the role of organized schooling in social change. We need a new well-rounded synthesis of the role of public education to replace the Cubberley synthesis. I do not believe that the cultural revisionists are giving it to us, and I agree with Carl Kaestle that we are not getting it from the radical revisionists:

> ... What we need and do not yet have is a new synthesis that will account for the school as the focal point of idealism as well as self-interest, an institution at once the object of public scrutiny and public ignorance, an institution that evolves more by mundane accretion than dramatic reform and yet continually arouses herculean efforts and exaggerated expectations. Most of all, we need a synthesis that abjures

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[22] Robert H. Wiebe, "The Progressive Years, 1900-1917," William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr. (eds.), The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture, National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, D.C., 1973, pp. 425-426.

> the premise that the American school has been an unequivocal failure, for such a premise - - like the earlier presumption of success - - precludes the explanation of change over time.[23]

I believe that the time is ripe for a new focus upon the institutional history of education so that we do not again become isolated from a major trend within general historiography itself. John Higham views the new institutional history as "one of the most vigorous aspects of American historiography."[24] Robert Wiebe finds a similar vitality with regard to the progressive years.[25]

In fact, educational historians may very well be in the lead in the new institutional history. Some of you here today are producing the building blocks for what I hope will be a well-rounded synthesis of public schooling that will take into account the whole range of modernization trends and their interactions upon one another.

David Tyack's impressive study of the organizational revolution in American education has shown the way toward a general interpretive framework for the history of urban education.[26] As Tyack so well displays

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[23] Carl F. Kaestle, "Social Reform and the Urban School," History of Education Quarterly, vol. 12, no. 2, Summer 1972, p. 217.

[24] John Higham, op. cit., p. 161.

[25] Robert Wiebe, op. cit., pp. 431-439.

[26] David B. Tyack, The One Best System, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1974; an enlarged version of Project No. 0-0809, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, entitled From Village School to Urban System, September 1, 1972.

in his work, "institutional history" need not be "house history," but can be "broad and multi-faceted."

Several other studies have shown that the histories of particular localities can also deal with a wide range of the modernizing forces I have mentioned and do it in the framework of the institutional history of public schools. Notable here are the histories of schooling in New York City by Carl F. Kaestle and Diane Ravitch, of Boston by Stanley K. Schultz, of St. Louis by Selwyn K. Troen, and of four systems in different sections of the country by Patricia A. Graham.[27]

There are numerous wide-ranging studies like those of the Office of Education by Donald R. Warren[28] and the history of school boards in fourteen large cities by Joseph M. Cronin.[29] And I am sure that there

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[27] Carl F. Kaestle, The Evolution of an Urban School System: New York City, 1750-1850, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805-1973; a History of the Public Schools as Battlefield of Social Change, Basic Books, New York, 197

Stanley K. Schultz, The Culture Factory: Boston Public Schools, 1789-1860, Oxford University Press, New York, 1973.

Selwyn K. Troen, Schools for the City the Shaping of Public Education in St. Louis, 1830-1920, unpublished manuscript.

Patricia A. Graham, Community and Class in American Education, 1865-1918, Wiley, New York, 1974.

[28] Donald R. Warren, To Enforce Education: A History of the Founding Years of the United States Office of Education, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Mich., 1974.

[29] Joseph M. Cronin, The Control of Urban Schools; Perspectives on the Power of Educational Reformers, Free Press, New York, 1973.

are many, many more in the works. The result, I hope, will be a soundly-based, inclusive conceptual framework for the history of American public schooling that will not only satisfy the most rigorous canons of historical scholarship, but will assist policy-makers and opinion-makers to develop a responsible and creative role for American education in the post-modern era of the nation's third century. Such a conception would be the best antidote for a microscopic empiricism in historical research as well as for a narrow ideological revisionism. But we will need to weave these separate studies together into an over-all synthesis. We will need to put it all together.

My third corrective for latter day revisionism will come as no surprise to those of you who know what I have been up to in the past dozen years. I believe that we must be much more sedulous in viewing the history of American education in comparative and international perspective as a phase of the modernization of Western civilization. Western education is an interlinking network showing common characteristics as well as significant differences. I have spelled out this theme in considerable length in my recent book and in a number of articles. I come to this theme not only because of the need to recognize the networking of modernization in all its phases, including the educational, but also because of the significant movements in historiography since the 1950s that stress comparative history and an interconnected world history. I need only mention such diverse

proponents for this view as C. Vann Woodward, C. E. Black, William H. McNeill, Robert R. Palmer, John K. Fairbank, and John Higham.

I believe we have been too long too negligent in this field. Of course, the history of American education has taken account of European influences from the founding of the colonies through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but by and large the truly comparative approach to the history of American education has not been highlighted either by historians of American education or by comparative educators. The radical revisionists seem to pay little or no attention to the international perspective, and while Cremin acknowledges its importance in his historiographical monographs it is yet to be seen how great or integral a part it will play in his forthcoming volumes.

The groundwork is being laid for the comparative and international approach if we will but take advantage of it. Stewart Fraser and William W. Brickman have made available valuable documentary sources for the nineteenth century[30] and Stewart Fraser for the twentieth century.[31] But we now need rigorous comparative analyses of the various stages of modernization in the several Western and non-Western countries. For

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30 Stewart E. Fraser and William W. Brickman (eds.), A History of International and Comparative Education; Nineteenth Century Documents, Scott, Foresman, Glenview, Ill., 1968.

31 Stewart E. Fraser (ed.), American Education in Foreign Perpsectives, Wiley, New York, 1969.

example, it would be fascinating to compare what Kaestle found in New York, or Schultz in Boston, or Katz or Lazerson in Massachusetts with Brian Simon's study of reform efforts of middle class and working class in England,[32] or with the theoretical proposals of social conflict marked by domination and assertion as formulated by Vaughan and Archer in their comparative studies of France and England in the early nineteenth century.[33] Similarly, we might gain useful perspective on the radical revisionist view of mid- and late nineteenth- and twentieth-century American education by comparisons with Shipman's study of modernization and education in England and Japan,[34] with the study by Marius B. Jansen and Lawrence Stone of modernization in Japan and England,[35] with Brian Simon's study of education and the labor movement in England,[36] or with John Talbott's study of politics and reform in France between the Wars.[37] The list could be much longer and I believe the rewards still greater from such undertakings.

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[32] Brian Simon, Studies in the History of Education, 1780-1870, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1960.

[33] Michalina Vaughan and Margaret Scotford Archer, Social Conflict and Educational Change in England and France, 1789-1849, Cambridge University Press, London, 1971.

[34] M. D. Shipman, Education and Modernisation, Faber and Faber, London, 1971.

[35] Marius B. Jansen and Lawrence Stone, "Education and Modernization in Japan and England," Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. 9, no. 2, January 196

[36] Brian Simon, Education and the Labour Movement, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1965.

[37] John E. Talbott, The Politics of Educational Reform in France, 1918-1940, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1969.

Each one of the major aspects of modernization that I have mentioned could become the focal point of historical studies to see what light they throw on the peculiar and distinctive role of education in the United States in comparison with other societies as they struggled to achieve nation-statehood, popular participation, industrial urbanization, secularization of knowledge, religious and cultural pluralism, racial and ethnic integration, or the "civilizing mission." For example, we could gain some perspective now on that pioneer comparative study of citizenship education undertaken by prominent political scientists in the late 1920s, headed by Charles E. Merriam.[38] We will need to relate those studies of nine countries to such recent studies by Almond and Verba on the civic culture,[39] by Byron G. Massialas and his colleagues on political attitudes and political knowledge,[40] and Judith Torney's most recent studies of civic education in ten countries as part of the International Educational Achievement project.[41]

We are developing a good deal of evidence concerning political socialization in the 1960s and 1970s to which we might relate the benchmark

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[38] Charles E. Merriam, The Making of Citizens, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1931; reprinted, Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1966.

[39] Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture; Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 196

[40] Byron G. Massialas (ed.), Political Youth, Traditional Schools; National and International Perspectives, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1972.

[41] R. Farnen, A.N. Oppenheim, and Judith V. Torney, Civic Education in Ten Countries, Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm, 1975 (forthcoming).

study of civic education in the 1920s — and if possible somehow discover ways to reexamine the historical role of education in nation building from the eighteenth century forward. We have had relatively little attention to this subject since the works on nationalism and education by Edward H. Reisner and Isaac L. Kandel in the 1930s. And far too little with respect to the United States itself or to the outward reach of American education as it exerted influence upon education and modernization in Latin America, Africa, and Asia whether through the civilizing mission, imperialist expansion, technical assistance, or genuinely cooperative programs of international education. I am confident we could gain insights about the essence of our educational history at home by becoming more aware of our history in other lands.

I think, finally, that we need in the coming decade to give special attention to the history of the role of organized public education in building political community in the United States. I do not need to recite to you what Robert Hutchins has termed the "overkill" in attacks upon public education during the past decade. I have drawn attention to this in a series of articles during the past year.[42] The constant downbeat of romantic critics about

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[42] R. Freeman Butts, "The Public School: Assaults on a Great Idea," The Nation, vol. 216, no. 18, April 30, 1973, pp. 553-560.

_____, "The Public Purpose of the Public School," Teachers College Record, vol. 75, no. 2, December 1973, pp. 207-221.

_____, "Public Education and the Public Faith," Educational Quest, Memphis State University, Memphis, Tenn., vol. 18, no. 1, Spring 1974.

the horrors perpetrated by public schools upon innocent children; the upswing of effort by religious groups to get public funds; the volatile feelings about busing to overcome segregation; the social scientists' dictum that public schools do not reduce inequality or really make much difference in social change at all; the heightening of group feelings among racial and ethnic groups in their search for maintaining or reasserting particularist identities; the revulsion against any kind of authoritative establishmentarianism symbolized by compulsory attendance laws or credentialling; the contests over community versus professional control. These and many more specifics have transformed the siren call of "alternatives" into a bullhorn of non-negotiable demands.

In all this uproar of particularisms we have nearly forgotten the principal, original reason for moving America to a system of education that would be public in purpose, public in access, public in control, and public in support, namely, to help create and maintain a democratic political community in a society made up of diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. The Revolutionary generation stressed the importance of a system that would promote republican ideals, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. In the past few years we have heard little about the positive <u>political</u> goals of public education in the midst of our preoccupation with the problems of politics and education. And our two main revisionist movements have been strangely silent on this issue, one tending to praise the virtues of diversity

and pluralism and voluntarism, and the other to condemn the evils of a monolithic, monopolistic, bureaucratic system reared in the past and dominating the present.

I am fully aware of the suspicions of, not to say the revulsions against, using the schools for patriotism, propaganda, partisanship, or politicization of right or left or middle. These fears have had recurrent justifications as a result of excesses in World War I, World War II, and Vietnam. But I believe it is time that we faced once again, and much more candidly and factually, the historical underpinnings of the political purpose of public education. Surely, the reevaluations of public morality in government that we are now going through makes the reexamination of public education more urgent than ever. And as far as I can see, few educators are taking the matter very seriously.

The several national commissions on educational policy recently at work (President's Science Advisory Committee, USOE Panel, Kettering, and Carnegie) have had precious little to say about the political purposes of education. The economists and sociologists have been hung up on matters of income, inequality, and class; the psychologists with genetics and achievement. True, the political scientists and a few anthropologists have begun seriously to study contemporary and comparative political socialization as well as politics and education, but the historical dimension also urgently needs attention. The original idea of American public education drew upon

the Western stock of Enlightenment ideas which assumed that public education had primarily a political purpose in the modernization process. We need to reexamine what has happened to that idea during the past 200 years.

I believe that we must look again at our history to see what the public schools did do and did not do, what they did well and what they did ill for the building of political community in a society composed of diverse peoples divided along religious, linguistic, racial, ethnic, economic, cultural, and social class lines and in a world of nations that were rapidly modernizing their political systems, agriculture, industry, urban centers, science, technology, and secular styles of life. To what degree has American public education succeeded and to what degree has it failed in this political function?

By political community I refer to those persisting sets of relationships that bind together the members of a society as they undertake to conduct their common affairs through a shared political system. In the United States the political community is symbolized in the term "We the People" who represent the ultimate authority in the political system. What makes a diverse people into a "we" are the common moral commitments and the shared sense of distinctive identity and cohesion that are essential for building, maintaining, and improving the basic political structure as well as the day-to-day processes of governmental decision-making. I am especially concerned with the role that education plays in forming the codes of behavior, the common frames of knowledge, belief, and value that characterize the overall

political community and the basic political structures (often called the regime) through which the community operates. The political community is thus to be distinguished from those other types of communities whose binding relationships are based upon religion, kinship, race, ethnicity, language, culture, nature, social or economic class, intellectual interest, scholarly knowledge, military power, or revolutionary violence. The tensions and cleavages arising from the conflicting loyalties and contending interests of these other kinds of communities make the building of political community a particularly difficult and demanding task.

All modern political communities have developed some form of public education as an aspect of their community-building process. In a democratic and libertarian political community, education professes to promote the maximum freedom for the individual and to honor social and cultural diversity among the other communities as well as to build the cohesion and unity essential for a viable polity. The political goal of education is thus to prepare the individual to be able to play his part in the structures and processes of his political community by acquiring the understanding, attitudes, and commitments necessary for making deliberate choices among real alternatives and to do this upon the basis of disciplined thought and solid and reliable knowledge, upon what Lyman Bryson called "significant truth rather than plausible falsehood or beguiling half-truth."

In attempting to socialize the younger generation to the political culture and recruit persons to perform the tasks required for the orderly and effective conduct of the political system, education is caught up in the contests between the goals of social cohesion versus cultural pluralism, assimilation versus ethnicity, religious values versus secular morality, equality of opportunity versus economic individualism, egalitarianism versus intellectual hierarchy, complex bureaucracy versus creative professionalism, social justice versus racial or class separatism, civil liberty versus national security, and national interest versus international comity.

This then is the setting in which we need to direct attention to the history of the political role of public schooling: a neglect by revisionist historians so far, a growing body of contemporary research in political socialization and political culture that may provide new insights into the history of the role that the schools played in the past, and the desperate need for new insights into the basic moral and educational underpinnings of our entire political system. I agree with Senator James L. Buckley's eloquent and tortured statement of March 19, 1974, in which he said:

> The Watergate affair can no longer be thought of as a troublesome episode such as occurs from time to time in the political history of every country.... Watergate has expanded on a scale that has plunged our country into what historians call a "crisis of the regime."

> ... A crisis of the regime is a disorder, a trauma, involving every tissue of the nation, conspicuously including its moral and spiritual dimensions....
>
> I speak of the spreading cynicism about those in public life and about the political process itself. I speak of the pervasive and undeniable sense of frustration and impotence that has become the dominant political mood in the nation. I speak of a perception of corruption that has effectively destroyed the President's ability to speak from a position of moral leadership. And I speak of the widespread conviction that Watergate and all that it has brought in its wake has done unique and perhaps irrevocable damage to our entire system of government.[43]

As educators and as historians we must now strive as never before to throw light upon the political role of American education. I agree with Donald Warren's assessment that the public school in origin was a political idea of great importance. Despite its failures and threats of fearsome control over non-conformity and cultural diversity, we need to recognize that it is still a great idea providing "a splendid and liberating vision of a nation

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[43] The New York Times, March 20, 1974, p. 29.

sustained by enlightened citizens and leaders" and remains worth salvaging.[44] I am impressed too with Charles Tesconi's intriguing point that the fragmentation of society and privatization of the individual which marked advanced industrial society makes the individual more susceptible to social control by corporate life rather than less and that the calls for greater diversity and pluralism and alternatives will thus raise the individual's susceptibility to accepting more social control through further fragmentation. Since affiliation and commitment to stable and enduring institutions are necessary to the well-being of individuals, we need more public schooling, not less.[45]

I am convinced that we thus need to look as hard as we can at the successes and failures of public education in building a sense of civism appropriate to the goals of a libertarian political community in the United States over the past 200 years. We will need to summon all the imaginative historiographical resources we can muster to this task. The political scientists and sociologists can interview present students and teachers about the development of their political attitudes but it will be much more difficult to discover how and what sentiments, commitments, and political virtues the schools were responsible for in the past.

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[44] Donald R. Warren, "Public School as Political Idea," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, Denver, Colo., October 1973.

[45] Charles A. Tesconi, Jr., "Schooling and the Privatization of Experience," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, Denver, Colo., October 1973.

Right now, I think that the development of a strengthened civic morality and political integrity is the first order of business for America, and the development of an appropriate civic education is the first order of business for American education. And integral to both is a renewed vision, if you please a re-vision, of the historic public purposes of American education. If I may paraphrase John Higham in the quotation I cited earlier: "We have today no unifying theme which assigns a direction to the history of American education and commands any wide acceptance among those who write it. Nothing in the current situation of the historian of education more seriously compromises his civic function and influence." And again, "Historians of education need a unifying vision of who they are and where they are going. That kind of vision establishes both a goal for the future and a synthesizing perspective upon the past. Without it a fully educative life is impossible."

So we come to the epitome of my theme which we may term the Progress of the Pilgrim called Historian.

Once upon a time, 'way back in the Progressive Era, Historian was content to follow Evangelist Cubberley's Pietistic history of American education.

But this progressive enthusiasm was destroyed in the turmoils following the wars of the world.

So Historian left the City of Destruction in search of new historical truth in the Celestial City. As he was struggling up the Hill of Difficulty he was met by two contending Revisionists.

Cultural Revisionist urged him to replace his Pietistic history of education with a Paideia-istic history of American education. So Historian followed this path for awhile, but he found that while it brought him to the multifarious educative agencies of House Beautiful, Vanity Fair, Bypath Meadow, and the Land of Beulah, there were too few schools from which he could learn about the true history of education.

So Historian returned to the main path of schooling and turned into the lane urged upon him by Radical Revisionist, but he found that this lane of Iconoclastic history of education only led him into the Slough of Despond and the Valley of Humiliation, and he ended up in the Doubting Castle of Giant Despair.

Just when it looked as if Historian would be eternally condemned to one of these "alternatives," he met up with a third Revisionist who urged upon him a Modernizing history of American education to replace the Pietistic, the Paideia-istic, and the Iconoclastic histories. Modernizing Revisionist promised to synthesize the sentiments of Interpreter, Faithful, and Hopeful with the empirical and scientific facts of modern (not to say quantitative) history.

And just when it seemed that Pilgrim Historian was finally to reach

the City on the Hill, there appeared in the distance still another Revisionist who warned that modernization with its warring national sovereignties, crumbling cities, rival group loyalties, and environmental pollution would not enable Historian to surmount safely the River of Death. Thus, in the nick of time, Ecumenical Revisionist at last was about to bring Historian to the final, positive, inescapable truth in which the history of American education would find its place in a worldwide history of education befitting the emerging post-modern City of the Ecumene.

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